1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P. 165-A] There is a profusion of wild flowers and orchids and many different kinds of vine. The Mbuti make great use of various species of *Ficus* for the manufacture of barkcloth, and certain vines are used to make string and hunting nets. There are also trees that give a sap which, if taken from one part of the tree, can be used as a cooking oil and, if taken from another, can be used either as an adhesive or as fuel for a torchlight. The Mbuti have a knowledge of effective medicines prepared from plants and roots, and also of poisons.

Schebesta (1952, 95–147), in response to persons who hold that the Mbuti have no culture of their own (e.g., Kerken, 1944), points to their remarkable adaptation to the forest environment. The level of their culture may not be high, but, even though primitive and "conservative," it is distinctly a forest culture and distinctly Pygmy. Their needs are few, and raw material is abundant. The striking thing is the minimal extent to which they utilize this material. Both Schebesta (1952, 98) and Putnam attribute this to the super-sufficiency of the environment itself which, making minimal demands, is accorded a minimal response. Mate-

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

TECHNOLOGY

372 Fire making is totally unknown, even as it is to some of the neighboring village tribes, according to Putnam. Glowing embers wrapped in phrynium leaves are carried everywhere, even on short journeys. They are also used, as described by Schebesta, for light at night and for fighting off invading ants. Another form of light (Fig. 31a), in the shape of resin torches (KiBira: *kasuku*), is sometimes used, but at no time is wood specially cut (such as the *akata* mentioned by Schebesta) to make firebrand torches. Campfires are always made the same way—three logs, their ends pointing to the center, where kindling is placed and where cinders form on which cooking is done.

[416] [373] [314] [252]

411 Poison is used on untipped arrows, as described by Schebesta. These arrows are carefully protected by leaf covers until used. They are much more widely used than the metal-tipped arrows, largely, as the Mbuti admit themselves, because they are such poor shots.

Sometimes spearheads are also untipped, the wooden points being fire-hardened, but there is no evidence that these are poisoned, and they are becoming rare.

462 In none of the normal routine work in a Pygmy camp such as that described by Putnam [463] is there any specialization, except in so far as certain tasks are divided between men and women.

[P 201-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.201-C]

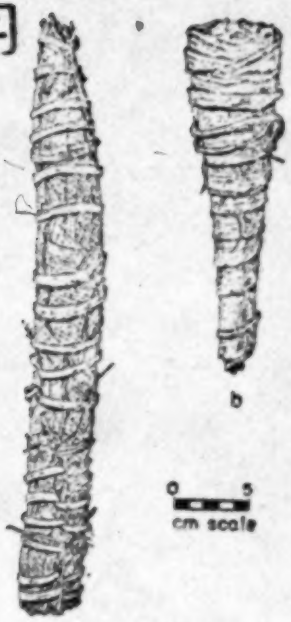

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FIG. 31. Miscellaneous items, net hunters, Epulu District, Central Ituri. a. Resin flare, *kasuku*, made of *kasuku* resin and wrapped in leaves; used when necessary to move from the hut at night. b. Bark pipe, *mbende*, used when village pipestems and bowls are not available.

[P. 93]

CHAPTER 8

The Band

TERRITORY

Before we can begin to understand what the Mbuti band is, we have to understand the notion of territory, which is effectively the only concept through which the band can be defined. Insofar as the band is the largest effective political unit, so the widest territorial boundaries that are recognized are those separating each band from the others. As will be seen, there is a current tendency for all Mbuti bands to recognize a loose unity to bind them in common opposition to the villagers, and in this context they will define a correspondingly wider territory, the forest, in which the villagers are regarded as trespassers. At the other end of the scale, the nuclear family has no territorial claims except those held jointly with other families of the same band. An individual may stake his claim to a tree that he knows or believes will yield honey, or to one that promises to provide good bark for making into cloth. A common way of showing that the tree is claimed is by tying a vine around the trunk at shoulder height.

A claim thus made by no means gives the individual or his family exclusive ownership of the tree or exclusive rights to its produce, however. It merely conveys the right for that individual to have the first opportunity for collecting the honey or for cutting the bark. When the honey is collected or the bark cut, it is done collectively and the claimant is subject to all the usual rules governing the sharing of forest produce. He will have precedence of choice and his share will be larger. If he is not on hand when the honey is ready, however, and if he does not signify his intention to come to claim it, his right is forfeited. It may be seen that the advantage accruing from this slight departure from the norm of joint band ownership of the territory and its produce is in no way great enough to detract from the central value of communal territory, but at the same time it is sufficiently

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4 Mbuti

for a rest took out her knife and went off to cut the branches and leaves needed to built their new home. Njobo shouted after her that she should get enough to build my house as well, saying that we would help her by collecting more leaves. He called to Masisi and Kenge, and I followed the three of them, wading across the Lelo and into the forest beyond.

The afternoon was already half spent, and by the light we could tell that the sky was clouding over. Njobo knew where there was a large patch of mongongo leaves. It was some distance off, but if we hurried we could get there and collect enough for all of us, he said, looking at me doubtfully. Kenge, ever practical, replied that I had long legs, so surely I would be able to keep up with them, and I would be useful as I could carry twice as many leaves as all of them put together. I did keep up, but only just. Because of the time and the approaching rain they followed small antelope trails instead of the larger buffalo trails, and in this way kept to a more direct route. But even they had to stoop as they ran along, and as they did not bother to cut the branches above their heads I had to go practically on hands and knees in places. Kenge was in front of me, and every now and then he warned me by a gesture of a thorny vine, so thorny that if you run into it unawares it can tear your skin to shreds.

We ran for half an hour without stopping, arriving at a thick growth of mongongo which stretched along the hillside for half a mile or more, down to the banks of the stream below. It was like a forest within a forest, the giant stems ending in the large heart-shaped leaves above our heads.

For a whole hour we cut leaves, working quickly and silently, cutting each leaf with a knife in the right hand, leaving a stalk about four inches long, and adding it to a bundle in the left hand. The others had to bend the plants down to reach the leaves, but even so they quickly accumulated small bundles. When they could hold no more in their hands they simply put the leaves down on the ground

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

and moved on. Yet when we had cut enough and were at the far edge of the mongongo grove, they knew exactly where each bundle had been put, and retraced their steps gathering the leaves as they went. Only then, when all the leaves were collected together, did they relax and talk, and pick a few wild berries with which to refresh themselves. Then they cut lengths of vine and softened it by running it quickly from hand to hand, pulling it sharply through the fork of the thumb. They laughed when I tried this and cut myself. With this vine they tied up the bundles, gave me the largest, and we set off on the way back, as fast as we had come.

As we came through the glade on the hillside above the Lelo we heard the voices of women and the laughter and shouting of children from the camp across the river, and when we got down lower and were wading through the cool stream, washing off all the dirt and perspiration, we could see long columns of smoke spiraling lazily upward through the trees. The camp was coming to life.

The clearing was full of activity. About twenty families had arrived, and each had already put up the framework of its little house. Arobanai and Loku, Ekianga's two senior wives, put their houses side by side at the north end of the camp, leaving a space for Ekianga and Kamaikan when they came out. Masisi's eldest son, Ageronga, helped his wife build their house between Masisi's and Loku's. Old Sau had already almost finished her hut, between my hillock and Arobanai's but closer to Arobanai, on the far side of the path that led off to the Lelo. Masamba was finishing the frame for her house; mine was complete, except for a few extra sticks and leaves needed for the doorway. She had done mine first. Now she squatted down making her own home, driving the saplings into the ground with sharp thrusts, each time in exactly the same place, so that they went deeper and deeper. When she had completed a circle she stood up and deftly bent the fito over her head, twisting them together and twining smaller saplings across, forming a lattice frame-

THE MAKING OF CAMP LELO

For an hour the others lay around the fire, while I was pushed into a corner, and discussed where they would go to hunt the next day and which girls they would flirt with. They poked sleepily at the fire, sending up showers of sparks and filling the hut with smoke. In all the huts around us, families were chatting among themselves in a drowsy way, and occasionally some eavesdropper shouted a suitable comment, bringing a burst of laughter from all the nearby huts. The leaf walls keep out no sound at all, and anything said in an ordinary speaking voice can be heard four or five huts away. But before long the voices got sleepier and sleepier, and finally the only sounds were the chirping of crickets, the soft swishing of the already swollen Lelo, and the quiet falsetto of Makubasi as he sat outside his hut, all alone by a blazing fire. He held his baby son on his lap, and sang a lullaby, half to himself and half to the child. He was still singing when I went to sleep.

The next morning the camp was up at dawn, and before it was properly light there was hardly a soul left about—only old Tungana, sitting where his son Makubasi had sat the night before and like his son singing to the baby on his knee. Kenge said that some of the men had gone hunting early, because they needed a lot of meat to begin the molimo festival for Balekimito and they did not want to start until they had plenty of food. The rest of the men and women were out cutting the leaves and saplings needed to finish building the camp. We went to join them, not far off. The rest of the day we spent making the simple furniture of a Pygmy household.

Sticks lashed together and bound by vine thongs to a frame make one of the most uncomfortable beds in the world. The sticks themselves are comfortable enough, but for some reason these beds are made so that each end bends sharply upward and however you lie on it the effect is worse than being in a badly slung hammock. Some Pygmies don't bother with a bed but just put the sticks on the ground and lie on them, or sleep on dry leaves. Tables are made

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

Opposite: Kenge uses a hunting bow as a musical instrument.

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Ageronga's wife prepares a bundle of *mongongo* leaves for thatching her hut.

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[P 72-D]